



This week's stories from the media

- Parents back NAPLAN
- Creative arts means better grades
- ACT to phase out work of chaplains in public schools
- 100,000 children on pills for depression
- Kids being yelled at more than ever
- Kids well-being linked to Dad's mental health
- Focus on economics says the Reserve Bank

Creative Arts Means Better Grades

A new study shows that creative arts subjects like theatre and dance improve numeracy and literacy scores.

University Researchers from Virginia, in the US, followed over 10,000 mostly low-income Florida students from Kindergarten to Year 8.

After controlling for all other variables, they discovered that those who undertook creative arts subjects in Years 6 to 8:

"...went on to earn significantly higher GPAs and higher standardised math and reading scores, and were less likely to get suspended from school, compared to students who were not exposed to arts classes."

These students also "showed stronger social, behavioural, language, motor, and cognitive skills seven years earlier in preschool," which may suggest that more capable students tend to choose arts electives.

Yet the arts-high grades link remained even when the researchers controlled for these skills.

[Read the story](#)

Parents Back NAPLAN

Parents have backed NAPLAN and the maligned My School website, with new research revealing that most see nothing wrong in testing -students periodically to track their literacy and numeracy skills.

The research also called into question persistent claims by teaching unions that the regime was fuelling anxiety in children, suggesting that it was the school's approach - rather than the test itself - that was a contributing factor.

"This research shows that parents generally keep NAPLAN in perspective," said ACARA chief executive Robert Randall.

"They understand it is a point-in-time assessment, which is part of the regular school calendar."

The research revealed three-in-five parents believed NAPLAN was at least "quite valuable", with:

- 62% citing the snapshot it provided for their child's progress and
- 58% appreciating being able to compare their child to - others.

Another 36% of parents said NAPLAN gave them information that was not on the student's report card.



Just under half of parents supported NAPLAN moving to an online format, which was an increase on 39% when a similar survey was conducted in 2016.

Parents with children who took part in last year's online trial, which involved 193,000 students, expressed few

concerns.

Parents also signalled support for the My School website, which provides free information on enrolments, funding and NAPLAN data for every school in the country.

[More](#)

***“...The research also called into question persistent claims by teaching unions that the regime was fuelling anxiety in children....”***

### **ACT To Phase Out Work Of Chaplains In Public Schools**

**The ACT government will remove the religious work of chaplains from Canberra public schools by withdrawing from the School Chaplaincy program.**

The state's education minister Yvette Berry said the territory's education act mandated that public schools were secular.

“They're employed to continue to do that youth work and social work, which is important, but that is conducted in non-religious way,” she told the ABC on Friday.

Federal education minister Dan Tehan said it was disappointing the ACT government will deny students access to the services.

Berry questioned why Tehan sees religious affiliation as so integral to providing social and emotional support in government schools.

The Federal Government has provided \$247 million to support the program through to 2022 but requires workers to have a religious affiliation.

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### **100,000 Children On Pills For Depression**

**The number of Australian children on antidepressants has doubled to more than 100,000 in six years, prompting some of the nation's most experienced clinicians to warn that the nation is facing a mental health “iceberg”.**

The soaring demand reflects a growing community appetite for early intervention in the treatment of mental health and the rise in public awareness about depression.

It is broadly accepted in the mental health sector that there is a valuable role for antidepressants in the treatment of some children.

However, experts are questioning whether there is sufficient support for other services - such as psychology - to buttress and precede the use of medication.

“Medicines go up where psychological therapies go down,” Medical professor Ian Hickie of the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre, told The Weekend Australian.

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### **Kids Being Yelled At More Than Ever**

**Aussie kids are being exposed to yelling more than ever before and it has experts worried about the future mental health of our nation.**

A new report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth shows up to one in five Aussie kids are experiencing “frequent yelling” at home either at them by their parents, exposure to their parents yelling at each other or child-on-child yelling.

And it's causing massive stress for children, resulting in increased anxiety, depression and lower academic performance.

“Long term the impact is increased anxiety, poor self-esteem and depression,” he said.

[Full Story](#)

### **Kids Well-Being Linked To Dad's**

**Fathers' mental health and the quality of their co-parenting relationships have a powerful impact on child development.**

Evidence shows fathers who are sensitive and supportive have children who develop better social skills and language, regardless of socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity.

Research also shows when fathers experience mental illness, their children are at higher risk of behavioural and emotional difficulties.

There is also emerging evidence to show supporting fathers' mental health early in their parenting journey has positive effects on children.

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### **Focus On Economics Says RBA**

**The Reserve Bank has called on education authorities to help arrest the sharp decline in the number of senior students in NSW studying economics, by elevating the status of the subject within the curriculum.**

Once the third most popular subject choice for Year 12 students, economics enrolments have plummeted over the past two decades.

Just 7% of Year 12 students took the subject last year - two-thirds of them boys - compared with 40% in 1991.

The RBA also calls on more teachers to be equipped with the training to deliver the subject and for the embedding of economics into other subject areas.

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